



January 19, 2017
Redistributed July 27, 2017

Dear Member of Congress,

As members of law enforcement, we are on the front lines responding to the opioid epidemic and we believe it would be a huge mistake to cut funding for Medicaid in the middle of this growing crisis. Our officers are on the street every day responding to overdoses and working to get people with opioid dependence into treatment and recovery programs. We are writing you because changes in national health policy, especially those that affect access to care for mental illness and addiction, can have immediate negative consequences on public safety in our community, and we need your help to prevent this from happening.

As Congress considers changes to the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid, and other federal health programs, we urge you to work against any proposals that will make it harder for individuals with mental illness and substance use disorders to access treatment. For example, the Affordable Care Act made parity for mental health and addiction treatment a requirement for all public and private insurance plans. If that requirement is not maintained, many people with mental illness and/or addiction in our community will not be able to get treatment. Also, the expansion of treatment providers that is now underway and that is making it easier for people to get help will end and treatment providers will start to cut back if Medicaid and other insurance coverage is ending. They will be back on the streets, a danger to themselves and others. Many families may be able to buy less expensive insurance policies under some of the ideas being discussed in Washington. However, if the less expensive policies do not include treatment for addiction and mental illness, families may quickly become bankrupt if one of their kids suddenly needs treatment for an opioid addiction.

Our police departments joined the Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative (PAARI) because the opioid epidemic hit our communities hard and we realized that we cannot arrest our way out of it. Traditional criminal justice approaches to addiction have not been effective, so we are part of this nationwide movement led by law enforcement that recognizes addiction is a chronic disease that needs long-term treatment, not arrest and jail. A key tool in combatting the opioid epidemic is getting people into treatment and Medicaid and health insurance coverage are vital to accessing treatment. Medicaid provides insurance coverage for addiction treatment for the majority of the people we help. PAARI has more than 250 law enforcement department partners in more than 30 states saving lives every day. Together, we have helped an estimated 10,000 people into treatment to date. These programs make our cities safer and prevent overdose deaths. Undermining these programs will further burden law enforcement agencies like ours that are doing everything we can to grapple with this mounting crisis.

The opioid epidemic is the most urgent public health and public safety issue we face today, as a country and as law enforcement. As any health policy change is considered in Congress, we respectfully urge you to stand with law enforcement and vote "no" on any legislation that makes it harder for police departments like ours to prevent overdose deaths and protect our citizens. Thank you for considering the voice of law enforcement as you move forward.

Sincerely,

PAARI National Police Council

Chief Frederick Ryan, Arlington Massachusetts Police Department
Sergeant Michael Braley, Everett Washington Police Department
Sergeant Brittney Garrett, Jeffersontown Kentucky Police Department
Chief Danny Langloss, Dixon Illinois Police Department
Chief Timothy Lentz, Covington Louisiana Police Department
Chief Scott Allen, East Bridgewater Massachusetts Police Department
Chief Robbie Moulton, Scarborough Maine Police Department
Chief Joseph Solomon, Methuen Massachusetts Police Department
Chief Michael Botieri, Plymouth Massachusetts Police Department

With additional support from the following law enforcement officials:

Chief Thomas Bashore, Nashville North Carolina Police Department
Chief Thomas Hanley, Middlebury Vermont Police Department
Chief Mark Holden, Willard Ohio Police Department
Special Agent Brannon Prevett, Homeland Security Investigations, Corpus Christi Texas
Chief Michael Covert, Cooperstown New York Police Department
Chief Troy J Westfall, City of Salamanca Police, New York
Chief Gerald Sticker, Mandeville Louisiana Police Department
Police Commissioner Stephen G. McAllister, Floral Park New York Police Department
Chief Damien Pickel, Milo Maine Police Department
Mental Health Peace Officer Chris Morgan, City of North Richland Hills, Texas
Sheriff John Simonton, Lee County Sheriff's Department, Illinois
Chief Brian Costa, Keene New Hampshire Police Department
Chief Janine Roberts, Westbrook Maine Police Department
Deputy Chief Jeff Satur, Longmont Colorado Department of Public Safety
Chief Rick Brandt, Evans Colorado Police Department
Chief Martin Berber, Village of Phoenix Police, New York
Captain, Cory Nelson, Madison Wisconsin Police Department
Deputy Chief Edward J. McGinn Jr., Worcester Massachusetts Police Department
Chief Peter Volkmann, MSW, Village of Chatham, New York
Sergeant Teresa Meade, Wise Virginia County Sheriff's Office
Chief Keith Keough, Lodi Ohio Police Department
Chief Michael Richards, Newton New Jersey Police Department
Chief Adam Klimczak, LaPorte City Indiana Police Department
Chief Marc Montminy, Manchester Connecticut Police Department
Chief Tammy Nelson, Rock Falls Illinois Police Department
Chief Gary Sullivan, Easton Massachusetts Police Department
Chief Scott D. Benton, Whitman Massachusetts Police Department
Sheriff Anthony Wickersham, Macomb County Sheriff's Office, Michigan
Chief Sean Fagan, Rolla Montana Police Department
Chief Robert Bongiorno, Bedford Massachusetts Police - Central Middlesex Police Partnership
Chief Mark W. Dubois, Maynard Massachusetts Police Department
Chief Paul Burdette, Beaufort North Carolina Police Department
Chief Robert Francaviglia, Hillsdale New Jersey Police Department
Corporal Detective Patrice Ottey, Ocean Pines Maryland Police Department
Chief Jerome Uschold, Town of Tonawanda Police Department, New York
Chief Douglas F. Wyman, Jr., Sandwich New Hampshire Police Department
Chief Patrick Dillon, Plympton Massachusetts Police Department
Chief Craig Mace, Seekonk Massachusetts Police Department
Chief William Oswalt, Jaffrey New Hampshire Police Department
Chief Todd Barkalow, Freeport Illinois Police Department
Chief Jeffery Blake, Amboy Illinois Police Department
Chief Eric J. Guenther, Mundelein Illinois Police Department
Deputy Chief Matt Hollinger, Rockton Illinois Police Department
State's Attorney Mike Nerheim, Lake County State's Attorney's Office, Illinois
Chair Mike Nerheim, Lake County Opioid Initiative Illinois
Chief Kurt Cavanaugh, Polo Illinois Police Department
Chief Nick Ficarelo, Braidwood Illinois Police Department
Sheriff David Ernest, Boone County Sheriff Office, Illinois
Chief Lianne Tuomey, University of Vermont Police Services
Chief Mary R. Lyons, Mattapoisett Massachusetts Police Department
James and Holly Conley, James Conley, U.S. Marshal, Ohio
Chief Steven Casstevens, President, Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police
Program Director Michael, AEA of Dixon Illinois
Chief Stephen Schaible, Lena Illinois Police Department
Debra Deagle, Revere Massachusetts Police Department
Gina Marie Garofalo, Methuen Massachusetts Police Department
Christopher Rousseau, Methuen Massachusetts Police Department
Chief Michael Ward, City of Alexandria Kentucky Police Department
Chief Bob Lippert, Huron Ohio Police Department
Lieutenant Donna Daniels, White County Tennessee Sheriff's Department

Chief Brian Fengel, Bartonville Illinois Police Department
Sheriff Jeff Doran, Carroll County Sheriff's Office, Illinois
Chief Peter Morency, Berlin New Hampshire Police Department
Chief Jonathan Ventura, Arlington Police Department, Washington State
Chief Kenneth Strish, Borough of Berwick Police Department, Pennsylvania
Chief David Koepke, Bucyrus Ohio Police Department
Chief Thomas Davoren, City of Groton Police Department, Connecticut
Patrolman Craig Hoover, East Brunswick New Jersey Police Department
Chief Warren Nelson, Bolton Massachusetts Police Department
Director / Police Chief Frederick Harran, Bensalem Township Police Department, Pennsylvania
Sheriff Ronnie Oaks, Wise County Sheriff's Office, Virginia
Chief Michael Sauschuck, Portland Maine Police Department
Lieutenant / Angel Program Coordinator David Quinn, Gloucester Massachusetts Police Department
Chief James Spinney, Chelmsford Massachusetts Police Department
District Attorney Andy Watson, All Potter County Law Enforcement Agencies, Pennsylvania
Chief Brett Botbyl, Menominee Michigan Police Department
Chief Richard Stillman, Bridgeton Maine Police Department
Chief Paul A. Nikas, Ipswich Massachusetts Police Department
Chief Michael, Caribou Maine Police Department
Chief Michael Gahagan, Caribou Maine Police Department
Chief Leonard Wetherbee, Moultonborough New Hampshire Police Department
Chief Joseph Massey, Waterville Maine Police Department
Chief Edward Tolan, Falmouth Maine Police Department
Chief Robert C. Gregoire, Augusta Maine Police Department
Chief Walter Sweeney, Hanover Massachusetts Police Department
Chief Marc Duphily, Carver Massachusetts Police Department
Patrolman Heather Bauer, Norton Ohio Police Department
Chief Kris Nietert, Bedford Ohio Police Department
Chief Shawn O'Leary, Winslow Maine Police Department
Chief Jerome Uschold, Town of Tonawanda New York Police Department
Chief Marc Duphily, Carver Massachusetts Police Department
Chief Michael Miksch, Hanson Massachusetts Police Department
Assistant Chief of Police Eugene Wehrfritz, Town of Orchard Park Police Department, New York
Chief Richard Caton IV, Jay Maine Police Department
Sheriff David Snyders, Stephenson County Sheriff's Office, Illinois
Chief Sean P. Geagan, Bucksport Maine Police Department
Chief Craig Sanford, Kennebunkport Maine Police Department
Chief John A. Dalessandro, Norton Ohio Police Department
Chief Chris Hunt, Bladenboro North Carolina Police Department
Chief Patricia L. Arnaudin, Ogunquit Maine Police Department
Deputy Chief, Marla St Pierre, Scarborough Maine Police Department
Chief Victor R. Flaherty Jr., West Bridgewater Massachusetts Police Department
Lee County State's Attorney Matthew Klahn, Lee County State's Attorney's Office, Illinois
Sheriff Kelly C Wilhelmi, Whiteside County Sheriff's Office, Illinois
Chief Edward J. Googins, South Portland Maine Police Department
Chief Kevin Ouellet, Amesbury Massachusetts Police Department
Chief Kevin Simpson, Hinsdale Illinois Police Department
Assistant Superintendent, James P. Muscato, Plymouth County Sheriff's Office, Massachusetts
Chief Bruce Boucher, City of Rockland Maine Police Department
Chief Charles Gray, North Andover Massachusetts Police Department
Chief Marc Maton, Village of Lemont Illinois Police Department
Chief Steven Vaccaro, Mokena Illinois Police Department
Chief Terry Lemming, Lockport Illinois Police Department
Chief Hartley Mowatt, Paris Maine Police Department
Chief John Llewellyn, Rockland Massachusetts Police Department
Chief Timothy Morgan, Sterling Illinois Police Department
Deputy Chief Anthony Haugh, Haverhill Massachusetts Police Department
Chief Tom Davis, Lynnwood Police Department, Washington State
Sergeant of Police, Coleman Langdon, Lynnwood Police Department, Washington State
Chief James Fitzpatrick, Lawrence Massachusetts Police Department
Chief Kevin Walsh, Wareham Massachusetts Police Department
Bradley DeCamp, Executive Director, Crawford-Marion ADAMH Board, Marion, Ohio
Chief Matt Vanyo, Olmsted Township Ohio Police Department